

Stranger Things: The Great Beyond by GingerIsTheCat

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Canon Continuation, Gen, Season/Series 03

Language: English

Relationships: Eleven/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-11-07

Updated: 2017-11-07

Packaged: 2022-04-02 14:41:38

Rating: Not Rated

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 1

Words: 661

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Season 3, as told by me. This will be a series of one-shot scenes continually woven into a developing story. Hopper's addiction debilitates him to the point where he can no longer take care of Eleven properly. She goes to live with Joyce Byers. Heartbroken, Hopper makes an effort to clean up his act so he can be a father again. He ends up visiting a lot, and in the process becomes closer with Joyce. Hints of a romantic flame begin to bloom, but only time will tell what will become of it. Joyce Byers is scared of ending up with a man like her ex husband again. That's why she chose Bob. Annoyed that Hopper, whom she calls "Mr. Macho", couldn't save him. El also struggles with how to deal with his addiction. Their relationship is strained by it, but they are still close.

The town gets hit by a series of twisters, and they all seem to be aimed at the same place. What is going on? 11 wants to save her mother, then starts having strange dreams. After a midnight trip to the woods, Billy started acting strangely, even for him, and then disappeared for a week. Steve feels like he's being stalked while he wanders about town thinking that nobody likes him, that he's a fake and a loser, and is just generally sorry for himself.

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Oh, and so you, you - Mr. Macho," Joyce said as she waved her hands in anger, "you couldn't save him." .

Hopper stepped forward "Joyce, we both know there's nothing I could have done. We were outnumbered, and -"

"Don't tell me that." She poked Hopper's chest fiercely as she spoke up at the tall man, fury lit up in her eyes. "You could have done something. I've seen you tear tires off cars when necessary." She nearly snarled, her voice becoming overwhelmed with emotion.

" That's a little different" he replied calmly in his deep gruff voice, barely restraining his own emotions for the time being.

"You know what I think, Hopper?" She shot like a sniper at him as she stepped back, crossed her arms, and looked at him accusingly, "I think you let him die because you were jealous". As she spat this out her voice cracked and wavered like a flame threatening to spread into a wildfire. Her anger and pain was so intense he could almost feel the heat of it.

"Jealous?" He asked incredulously. "Why would I be jealous. And even if I was, do you really think I'd let someone die because of it?"

"Oh, yes, jealous!" Joyce said stepping forward" she wavered her head downward and looked up as she wrangled her finger at him "Maybe not consciously, Hop, but underneath it all, you felt threatened." She hissed triumphantly.

"Threatened? By Bob? C'mon, I'm not that insecure, Joyce." Hopper said as he started to turn away.

"Oh yes you are. Because for however big and manlier you were than Bob, he beat you at one thing. And you couldn't stand that."

"What are you talking about?" He asked in marked exasperation "What could he have possibly outdone me in to make me feel jealous?

At this Joyce planted her feet and folded her arms, licking her lips and rolling her eyes in disgusted disbelief before going on "Don't play coy with me, Hopper" she said shaking her head at him and narrowing her eyes. "I saw your face when he saved us all by being the only one in the room who had bothered to learn basic!" she spat out her accusation "And you couldn't just let him have his day, could

you? You had to go and throw him to the hounds of hell themselves!" At this she nearly threw herself at him in heartbroken rage.

"Joyce!" Hopper finally turned and firmly grabbed her by the shoulders, unable to go on with the accusations, but still doing his best to steady himself against overwhelming emotions. Joyce looked startled at first, but soon steeled herself against him. He relaxed and sighed heavily, not sure how they had gotten to that point.

"Look" he said determinedly "I have no idea what I did or didn't subconsciously decide to do. I dunno, for all I know, maybe I was a little jealous. Maybe I did let the guy get killed. Who knows!." He said throwing his hands and eyes upwards. "But all I know for certain is that consciously" he pointed at his head "and that's what matters here, I was looking out for everyone. Especially you. And you know what, so was he. So why don't you just let his sacrifice lie in peace instead of dredging it out into an inferno hell! At this point he was yelling, and Joyce finally broke down into his chest in sobs, much to his bewilderment.

"Look, Joyce" he said more gently, after a moment of pause "you're grieving. I get that. But don't take it out on me".

"You could have saved him" she said, still sobbing as she beat his chest "we could have saved him. I should have!" Her voice went down into quiet weeping, and Hopper awkwardly took her in his arms and patted her back.

"Shh" he said gently "there's nothing we could have done."

"I know" she quietly intoned, and then she was still.